DEWAN : That is why I said that, when applications are made in respect of lands *available for registry* these are being considered favourably.

8. Registry of lands in the Devicolam taluk.

MR. E. RAMAN TAMPI (*Devicolam taluk*) said that a G. O. was issued in 1921 prohibiting registries of land in the Cardamom Hills Reserve with a view to preventing the assignment of lands in the Reserve to British Indian subjects. As there were Travancoreans who desired to begin cardamom cultivation in the area, the G. O. should be withdrawn. The lands which had been leased during the previous years in auction should be assigned to Travancoreans.

Another G. O. was issued not long ago that lands taken over by Government for one chackram for arrears of tax etc., might be sold in auction. Those lands could be assigned to Travancoreans under the Cardamom Rules. All further registries within the reserve should be to *bona fide* subjects of the State and applications from foreigners and foreign companies should be rejected. A condition should be inserted in the *pattas* that alienations to non-Travancoreans would not be recognised, as in the case of registries to *Muduvans* and other hillmen.

Every cardamom estate required cooly lines, a house for the proprietor to live in and a store or cardamom factory for drying up the produce, which could be constructed only on grass lands. Grass lands should be assigned to cardamom *pattadars* notwithstanding the prohibition order, and a rule should be laid down that all cardamom *pattadars* would be entitled to a certain extent of grass land according to the size of the estate.

All good lands in the Devicolam and Peermade taluks were in the possession of foreign companies. There were vast areas of virgin and fertile forests on both sides of the Pallivasal-Neriamangalam road. Those lands should be divided into convenient blocks and registered otherwise than by auction to *bona fide* Travancoreans on a low rate of *tharavila*.

There was no provision in the Puduval Rules for assignment of lands without auction when there were no valuable improvements and *bona fide* occupation. The rule that there should be *bona fide* occupation and valuable improvements for registries otherwise than by auction indirectly encouraged encroachments on Government lands, which respectable and law-abiding citizens were not prepared to take advantage of. As Travancoreans could not compete successfully with foreign companies and capitalists in bidding at auction sales of lands, the Rules required modification. The member suggested therefore that the Land Assignment Rules should be so amended as to enable Travancoreans to get lands in the High Ranges registered in their names otherwise than by auction even when there were no improvements or occupation.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Raman Tampi, In my reply to Mr. Abdul Rahim, I said that Government are considering the question of revising the order constituting the cardamom reserves. And in making registries of Government lands, they are considering the claims of Travancore applicants for the registry of lands in the High Range areas where they have not got lands already.

You refer to a rule in the Puduval Rules whereby a person who is in occupation has a preferential right over a law-abiding man who did not enter upon Government lands before getting their permission. Government themselves have in contemplation a revision of the Puduval Rules, especially Rule 18 of the same. I cannot promise that the revision will be in the direction in which you have wanted it. But, a revision is under the consideration of Government.

9. Reduction of the tax on rubber lands.

MR. E. T. C. FARR (*South Travancore Planters' Association*) spoke about the need for reducing the tax on rubber lands. The tax was introduced when large profits were being made in rubber in other countries. It was thought at that time that the rubber estates opened or being opened in Travancore would prove to be very profitable investments and in consequence the tax was levied at Rs. 2 per acre which was very high compared to taxes on other products. It was, however, quite evident that rubber was not going to prove such a profitable investment. It was particularly so in South India where yields were poor in comparison and where it had become literally a fight for existence. Many estates had in fact closed down altogether. The agents, the rubber planters and their subordinates had in the previous few months to make considerable sacrifices in salaries, bonuses, etc.; and nearly all works necessary for the general upkeep and proper maintenance of the estates were being curtailed or cut out altogether.

The member concluded his representation by making the suggestion that in the above circumstances the planters were more than justified in asking for a reduction in the tax from Rs. 2 to Re. 1 per acre or, if that could not be done, for a remission in the payment of the tax until rubber had recovered.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Farr. The condition of the rubber market that you referred to in your representation is, I believe, slightly improved now. It is not rubber alone that is suffering, but all sorts of crops from land; at any rate, all sorts of produce that we are accustomed to have in Travancore, are suffering equally with rubber. Your prayer that some relief must be given to the rubber planters will certainly be considered by the Government along with similar representations that the Government are receiving from producers of other crops from land. You expressed a fear that rubber might not recover at all. We are all hoping that the present economic depression which is responsible for all these troubles is not going to last for ever or even last long. And we are all looking forward to the depression lifting